THE ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES OF THE SIDNEY JANIS GALLERY, NEW YORK

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LOS ANGELES '72

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© Sidney Janis Gallery, New York 1972

Los Angeles '72

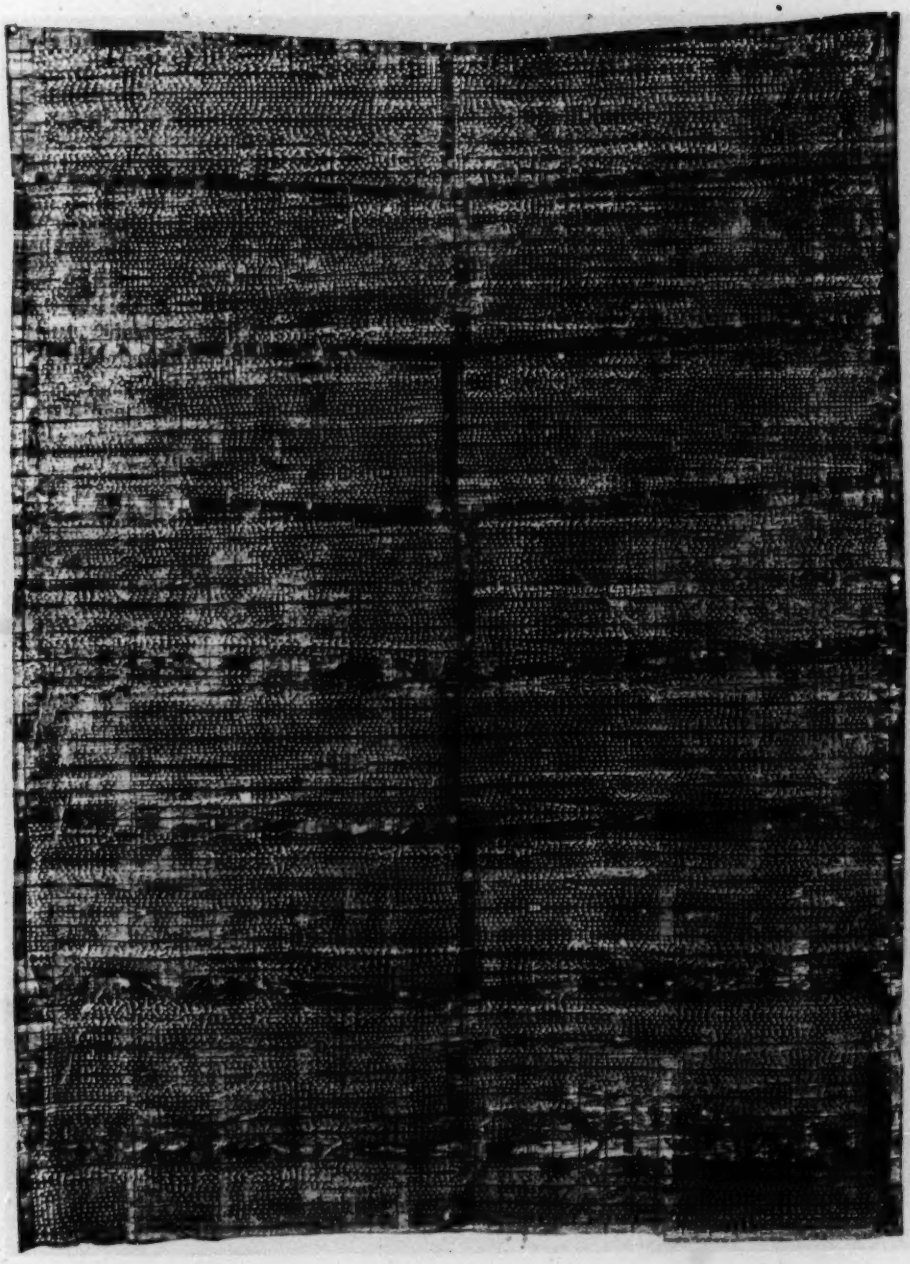
The Los Angeles art scene, in 1972, is radically decentralized and diversified. Significant work is being done in scores of studios, by artists of three generations, in Venice (no longer an exclusive enclave), in Pasadena, in the downtown area, and in various surrounding communities. The problem of exposure for Southern California artists persists, however. Each time a local group exhibition of quality is mounted in a major institution, there is a certain amount of surprised reaction attending it—as if the work had somehow emerged full-blown out of a vacuum.

In the spring of 1971 we organized a relatively modest and selective exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art called "24 Young Los Angeles Artists." The show was seen by a great many out-of-town critics, curators, dealers and artists, and commented on with unusual interest. It was on the basis of that presentation that Sidney Janis conceived the notion of mounting a new Los Angeles exhibition in his New York gallery. Mr. Janis contacted us and we arranged to visit, with him, in an intensive three-day odyssey, the studios of twenty-five artists, and to view the work of many additional artists through photographs.

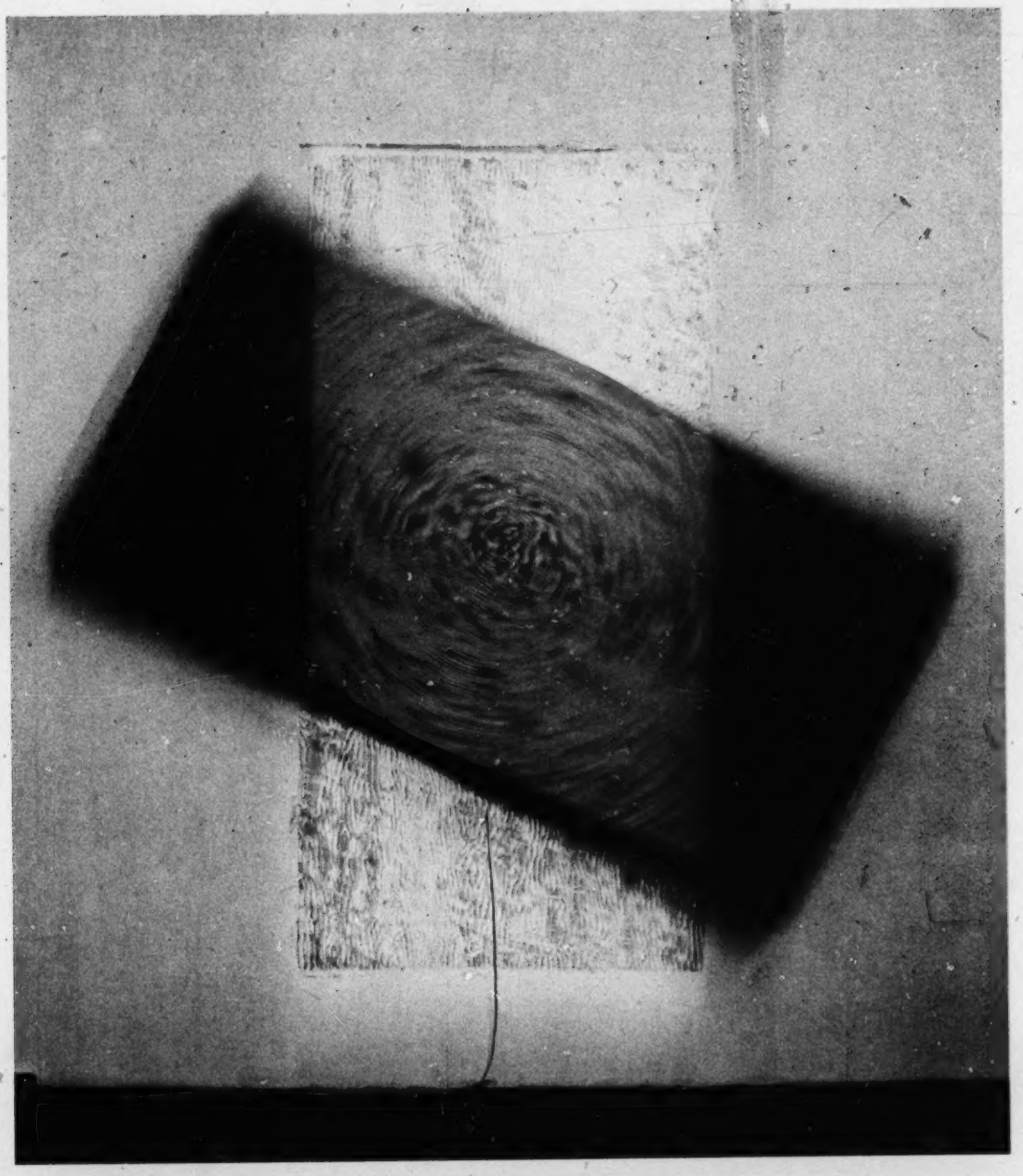
Of the artists seen and considered for the Janis Los Angeles '72 show, about half were eliminated from consideration simply because the scale or nature of their work was unadaptable to a small gallery situation. Prominent among these are Barbara Munger and Michael Asher, both of whom are among the most interesting young Los Angeles artists working in room-sized scale. Others were deemed to have already had enough significant exposure in New York to preclude their participation—it seemed to us desirable to emphasize work that would be fresh to the East Coast audience and open the way for little-exhibited artists to be seen and potentially re-exhibited in future museum and gallery contexts outside Los Angeles. Thus the exhibition became essentially a painting show, or at least a wall show. (The exceptions are the two video tape artists—William Wegman and Wolfgang Stoerchle—and Arnoldi's floor-supported works). It took on the nature of an anti-L.A.-stereotype project in that plastic—a medium which came to be associated automatically with Southern California art of the 60's—is nowhere in evidence.

The work here seems to embrace separable attitudes. One is a concern with idea esthetics, or art about art, as in the parodistic work of Scott Grieger, the broad comments on abstract gestural painting implicit in Richard Jackson's constructs, or William Wegman's video tape and photographic works dealing both humorously and sophisticatedly with particular dramatic esthetic concepts. Second is a tendency which one might term primitivistic, or specifically ingenuous in its anti-formalism, for instance in the large landscape drawings of Ann McCoy and the highly sensuous, richly decorative paper hangings of Thomas Wudl. Then there is the preponderance of artists who in various ways treat formalist/illusionist problems with relative straightforwardness. But one immediately senses a very great difference in character between this show and comparable gatherings of young New York painters, which seem by and large more rigidly formalist in the sense of problem-solving and at the same time more delectable. Los Angeles artists, in short, have eschewed the "lyrical abstraction" syndrome. Their sources seem now to be neither in current east coast styles nor in the ascendant Southern California mode of the Sixties, as manifested primarily by Robert Irwin and Larry Bell; instead the persistent character is of experimentation in unusual materials or methods to make wall-bound works. Allan McCollum, for instance, stains canvas but cuts it in strips and remakes them into paintings with caulking adhesive; Patrick Hogan and Jack Barth each build up thickly layered matrices for paint, respectively with pressed felt and heavy paper; Deutsch employs wood as his support; Arnoldi too uses wood but in a way antithetical to the previous artist's intent. Interestingly, the last two artists shared a studio building in Los Angeles for a time, and at certain moments in their equally diverse developments were quite near each other esthetically. This phenomenon is symptomatic of a larger pattern of frequent, usually transient, overlappings and confluences of esthetic usages among many of these artists. It reflects an increasingly complex and intelligently assimilated interconversance taking place among the large Southern California art community.

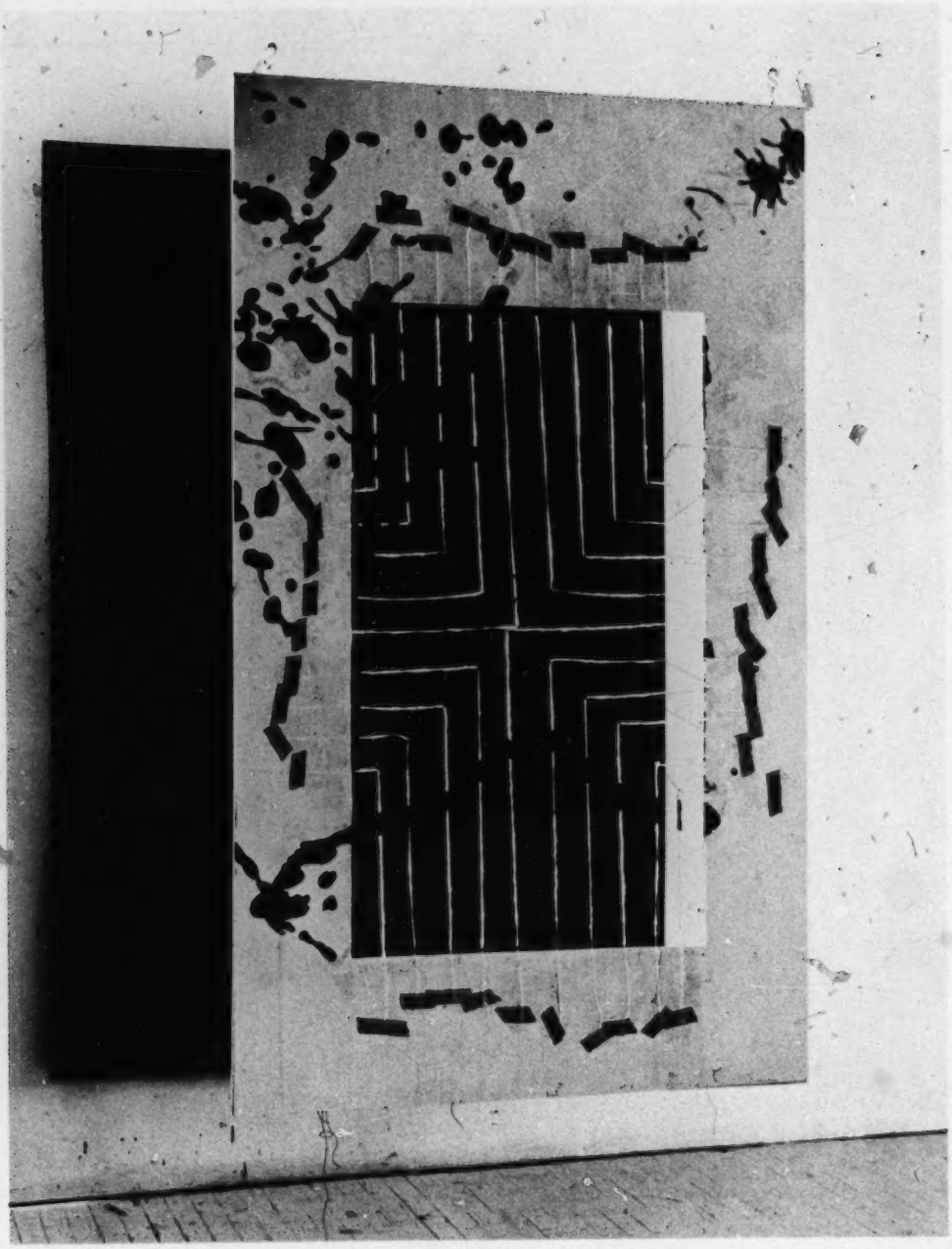
Maurice Tuchman
Jane Livingston



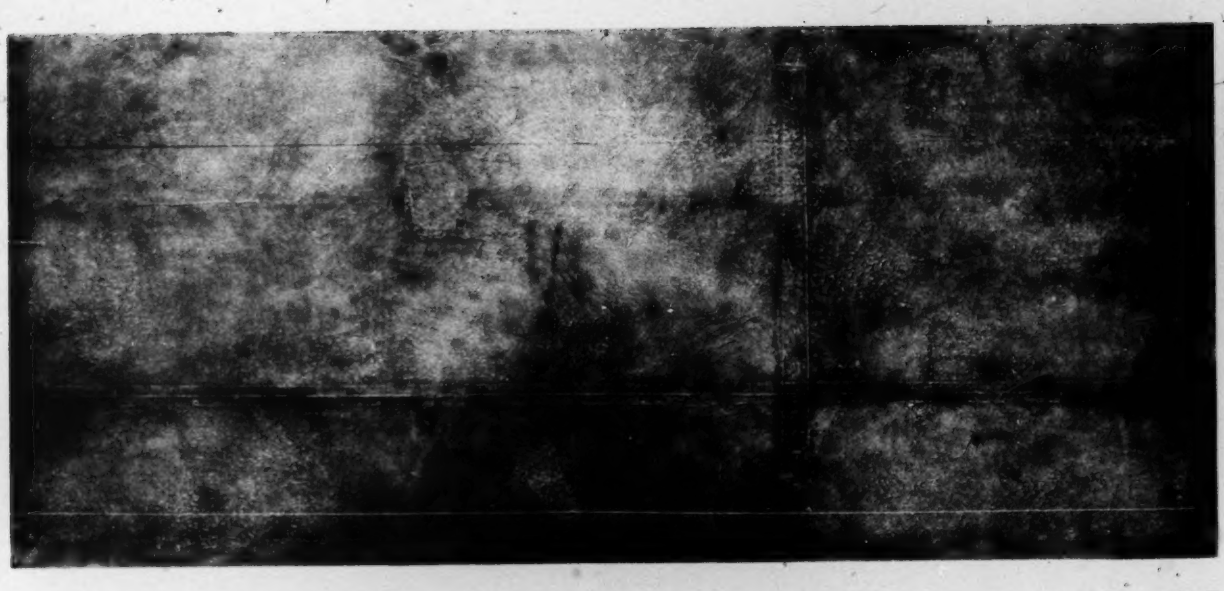
THOMAS WUDL **Bananas** 1972 Paper, polymer pigments 89 x 70" **23**



7 **DAVID DEUTSCH** **Film-X** 1971-72 Plywood, acrylic, ink, motor, light 90 x 48"



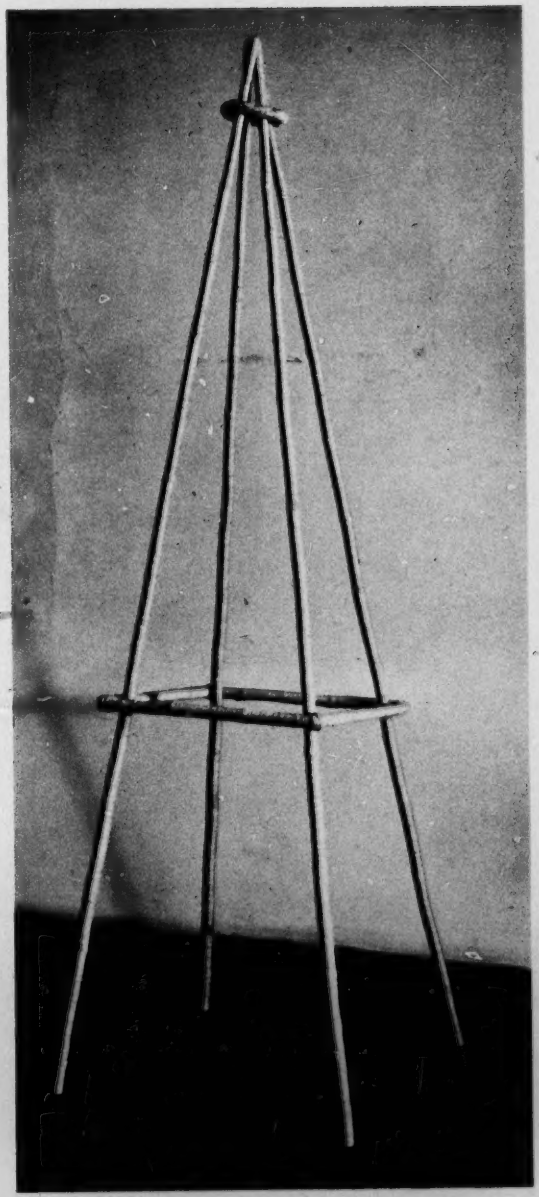
SCOTT GRIEGER **Untitled** 1972 Mixed media 72 x 42" **8**



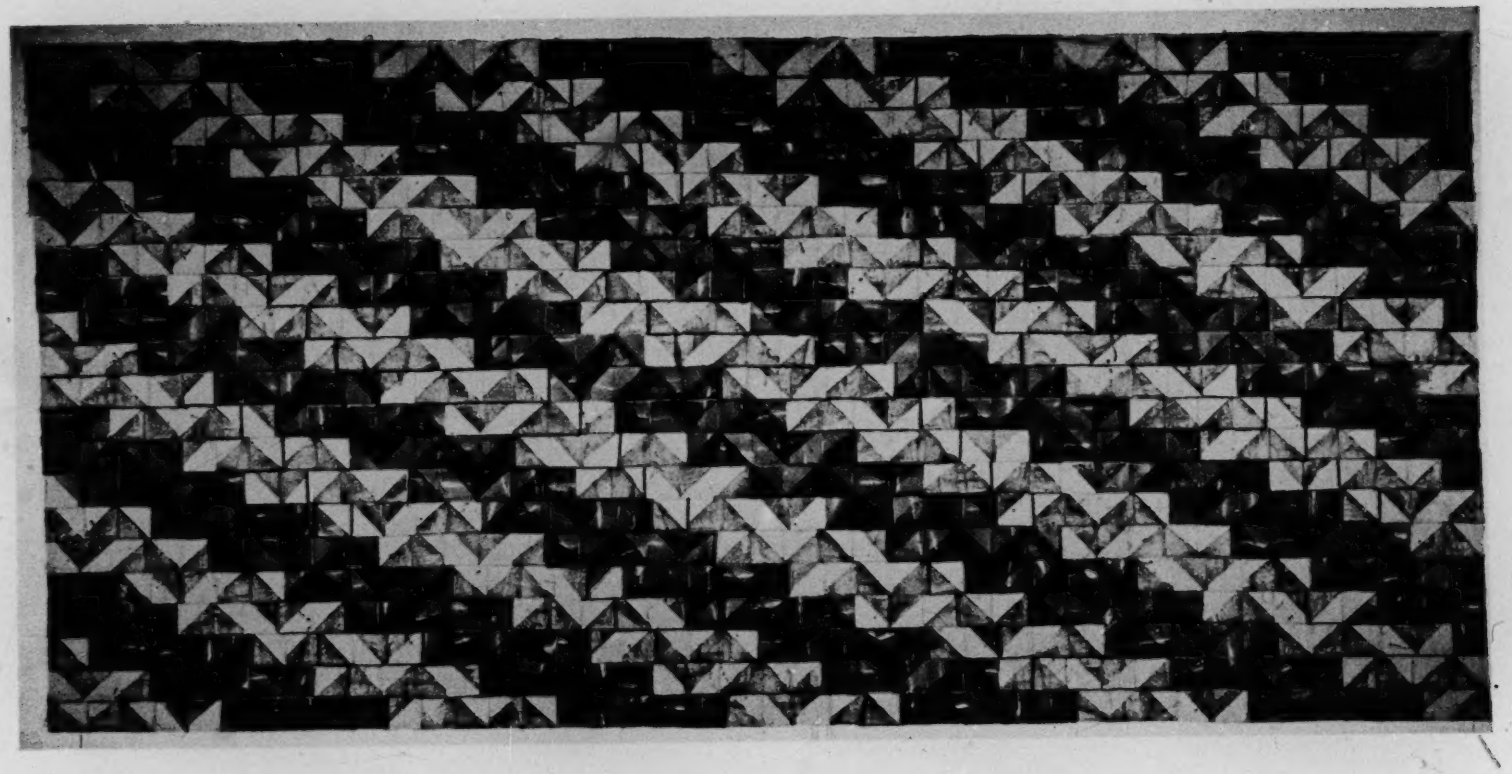
DON KARWELIS **Untitled** 1972 Layered paper, graphite 54 x 120" **14**

9A **PATRICK HOGAN** **After Scott's** 1972 Shredded cloth, acrylic 52 x 72"

17 **ANN McCOY** **Jungle Scene from Maui** 1972 Colored pencil, graphite on acrylic-coated paper 116 x 84"

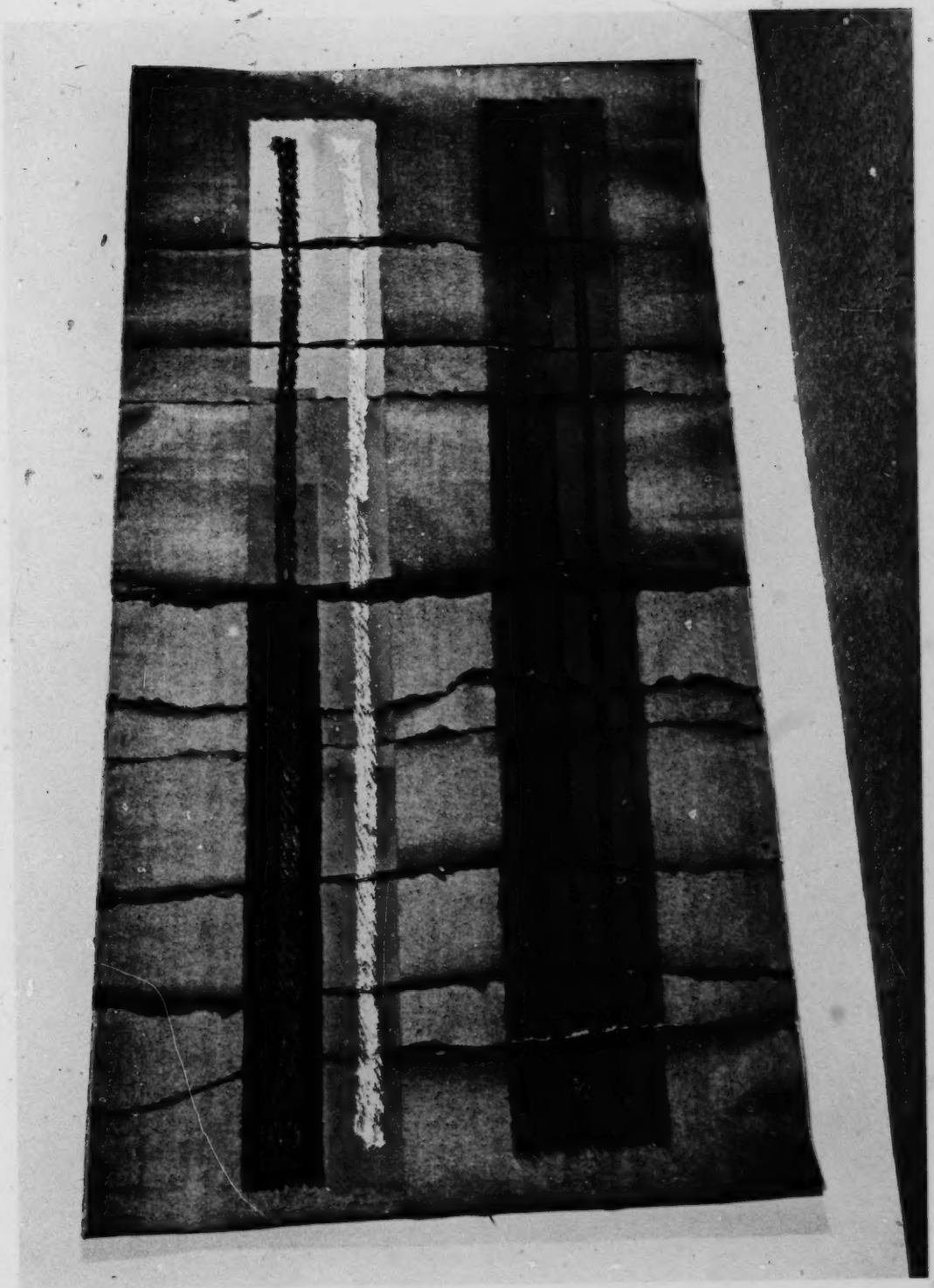


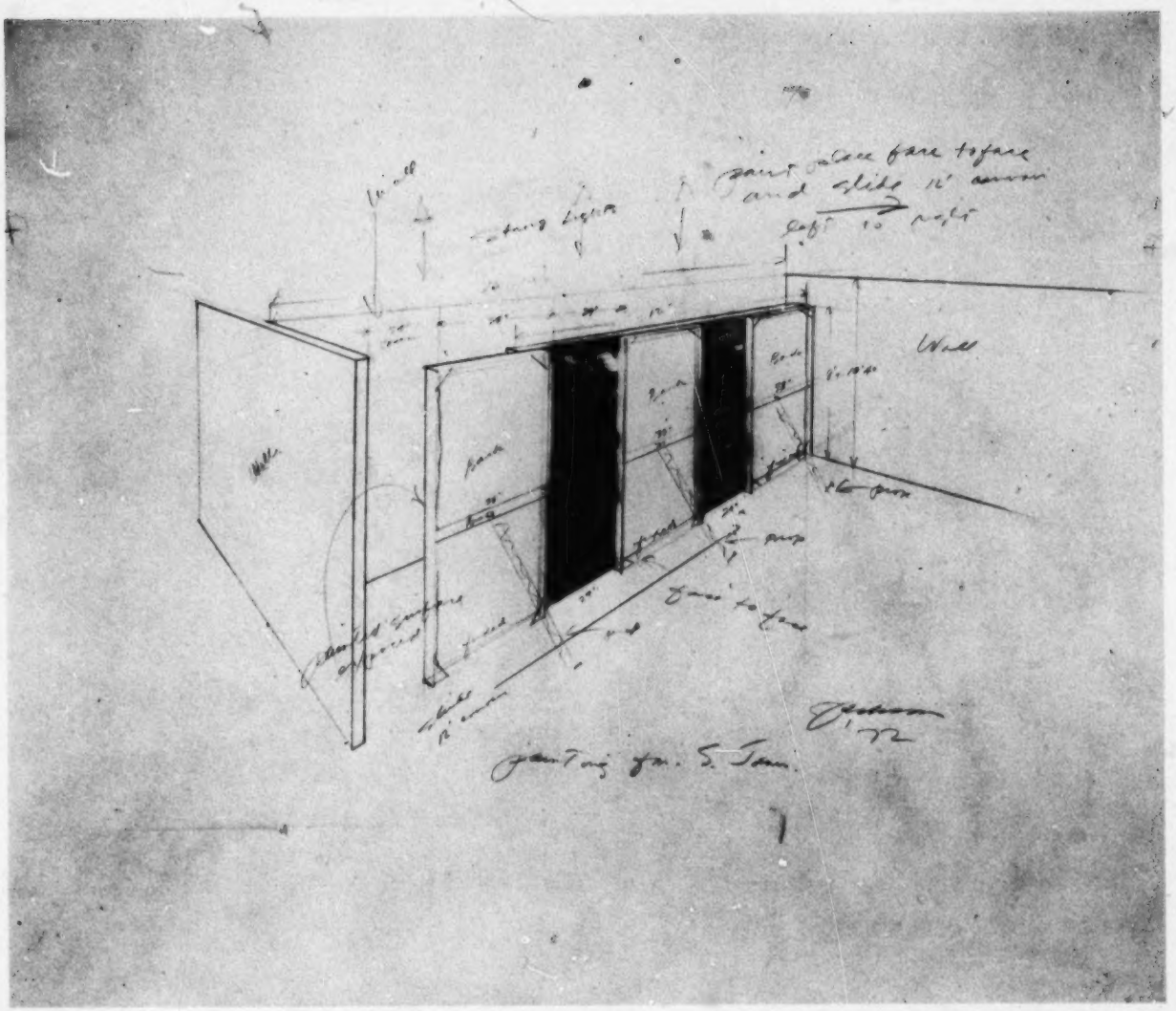
CHARLES ARNOLDI
Station Point 1972 Bamboo, twine 108" high **1**



15 ALLAN McCOLLUM **Skinning the Cat** 1972 Canvas, lacquer, varnish, caulking 108 x 221"

JACK BARTH **Traces #5** Carbon paper, chalk, reflective paint, paper 72 x 137" **5A**




Wall
Wall
Wall

CATALOGUE

CHARLES ARNOLDI

1 * **Station Point** 1972 Bamboo, twine 108" high

2 **Airplane** 1972 Bamboo, twine 55 x 68 x 64"

3 **Untitled** 1972 Bamboo, twine 92 x 20"

4 **Untitled** 1972 Bamboo, twine 36 x 36 x 15"

JACK BARTH

5 **Traces #6** 1972 Carbon paper, chalk, reflective paint, paper 72 x 132"

6 **Traces #7** 1972 Carbon paper, chalk, reflective paint, paper 72 x 132"

DAVID DEUTSCH

7 * **Film-X** 1971-72 Plywood, acrylic, ink, motor, light 90 x 48"

SCOTT GRIEGER

8 * **Untitled** 1972 Mixed media 72 x 42"

PATRICK HOGAN

9 **Untitled** 1972 Shredded cloth, acrylic 60 x 81"

10 **Pressed for Time** 1972 Shredded cloth, acrylic 79 x 68"

RICHARD JACKSON

11 **Untitled** 1972 Plywood, canvas, acrylic 99 x 202"

12 * **Untitled** 1972 Oil, pencil on paper 34 x 42"

13 **Untitled** 1972 Oil, pencil on paper 34 x 42"

DON KARWELIS

14 * **Untitled** 1972 Layered paper, graphite 54 x 120"

ALLAN McCOLLUM

15 * **Skinning the Cat** 1972 Canvas, lacquer, varnish, caulking 108 x 221"

ANN McCOY

16 **A Side View of Mt. Everest** 1972 Colored pencil, graphite on acrylic-coated paper 116 x 84"

17 * **Jungle Scene from Maui** 1972 Colored pencil, graphite on acrylic-coated paper 116 x 84"

WOLFGANG STOERCHLE

18 Selected video works 1971-72

WILLIAM WEGMAN

19 Selected video works 1970-71

20 **Family Combinations** 1972 Six photographs

21 **The Dog and the Box** 1972 Nine photographs

THOMAS WUDL

22 **Untitled** 1972 Paper, polymer pigments 33 x 24"

23 * **Bananas** 1972 Paper, polymer pigments 89 x 70"

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